Tells the Facts and Names the Names

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Our Little Secrets

Why the Nazis Banned Fractura

By Alexander Cockburn

Today, the uproar concerns CBS and its humiliation, as the victim of the forger's art. Go back to 1983, and we get to my favorite, the Hitler "diaries" forged by Konrad Kujau, who dashed them off in school exercise books, then bought Letraset at the local stationers to put a majestic "AH" on each cover in old German script. The stationer had run out of the letter A, so Kujau bought F instead. Each exercise book had FH on the front, which didn't prevent scores of Hitler scholars including the late Lord Dacre (aka Professor Hugh Trevor-Roper) from issuing their enthusiastic imprimaturs.

On the matter of Kujau and old German type I recently had this exceedingly interesting exchange with a German scholar of typography.

Dear Mr. Cockburn,

Those initials on the Hitler Diaries will forever haunt me: at that time I had a keen interest in German typography, especially the typefaces of the 20s and 30s.

The typeface used by Kujau was the 'Old English', and I will forever regret not having publicly asked at that time why Hitler would have used these types on his diaries - I can think of no example of the "Old English" being used in Germany before the second world war.

'Old English' only came into use in Germany after the war because practically all 'German style' fonts literaly disappeared.

Tjalf Boris Prößdorf

Dear Tjalf,

Thanks for this. You mean all old German fonts were destroyed in the bombings and Allied advances?

Best, Alex C

(OLS *continued on page 6)*

September 30 marked the eighth anniversary of welfare reform, signed by Bill Clinton in 1996. But the supposed reform and its impact have been almost entirely ignored by most of the press. When new poverty data were recently released, it was barely mentioned.

What Business Wanted from Welfare Reform

By STEPHEN PIMPARE

Since the 1970s, and the founding of of the Heritage Foundation, the rather modest expenditures on American welfare have been a central target of the right, and in 1996 they finally succeeded in repealing a provision of the Social Security Act of 1935. It is not that welfare was reformed simply because a cabal led by Heritage and other think tanks wished it so, and it is more than some "vast right-wing conspiracy", but there was a conspiracy, a sometimes loosely organized but always well-funded network of conservatives whose successful long-term mobilization, though in evidence since the Reagan Presidency, was fully revealed by the 1990s.

Its signal achievement, along with great new representation in elected office at all levels of the American political system (the consequences of which we face now and will later regardless of who wins the upcoming Presidential election), was to attain dominance over public debate and policy-making agendas, turning discussion away from the various versions of twentieth century liberalism toward the laissez-faire of the Gilded Age.

Consider the main provisions of what was formally titled the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRA) - time limits on benefits, the abolition of the (limited) right to relief, work requirements, anti-pregnancy programs - and ask what problems they sought to solve. Dependence, laziness, profligacy. These problems existed in the political world, thanks to the rights' propaganda campaigns against welfare, but they were not, on all available evidence, widespread problems. This is part of how all of Washington, it sometimes seems, can point to declining welfare rolls as sufficient evidence of reform's "success", ignoring the actual consequences of the law for our most marginalized citizens.

It is a measure of how far the foes of social safety nets have taken us so quickly that a text sponsored by the American Enterprise Institute cautioned in 1976, "Partisan rhetoric aside, few people seriously envisage dismantling the welfare state". Twenty years later Speaker of the House of Representatives Newt Gingrich would envisage just that. With the help of a Democratic president and substantial Democratic support in Congress, AFDC was repealed. Today Democrats and Republicans alike contemplate the "privatization" of Social Security and regressive "reforms" to Medicare, Medicaid, Food

(Welfare *continued on page 4)*

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ABB versus Movement Building:

Report from a Black Organizer in the South

By Kevin Alexander Gray

Right after the Wisconsin debate during the Democratic primary, a columnist called to ask my impression of John Kerry. Well, first I said the cracker's crazy. When the question of race and what he would do to improve the status of racial minorities was asked, Kerry fired off his standard campaign line about being a prosecutor and hiring black prosecutors and wanting to have more programs to help "at-risk" inner city kids. I went on to say; this placing an "at-risk" label on all things black is a problem in and of itself. At risk from what or whom? Prosecutors?

Most blacks see Kerry as a typical, patrician, northern, liberal Democrat. And they never trusted Bush even before he stole Florida. So, in this election, for the average black voter, that's the political calculus. Their political demand is simple – get Bush out of office.

But then, I live in a red state –- so what does it matter?

The Democrats long ago ceded the South, where 59 per cent or so of all black voters live, to the Republicans. And that abandonment is a rejection of the civil rights agenda. So, when the Democrats whine about possible Republican suppression of the black vote, I usually reply that Democrats are doing a pretty good job themselves.

What's more, Georgia's Zell Miller is no aberration. He is a DLC (Democratic Leadership Council) "Republicrat" or as Jesse Jackson Sr. would say, he a member of the "Democratic Leisure Class". Jesse Jr. calls it the "Democratic Legacy of the Confederacy." The DLC agenda mirrors the Republicans' "Southern Strategy" of reaching out and serving the interest of white, male voters at the expense of all others.

And Miller isn't the only southern Democrat to reject Kerry. Inez Tenenbaum, currently state superintendent of education, like Miller and Joe Lieberman of Connecticut is a DLC Democrat running a "Republican-lite" campaign. Tenenbaum, running to replace retiring South Carolina Senator Ernest "Fritz" Hollings, said that she would rather not campaign with Kerry.

In her comments to the South Carolina Democratic Party Convention on May 1, 2004, she boasted, "South Carolina has a proud tradition of independence. We believe what we believe, and we do so without apology. We understand that independence is strength – the strength to resist the call of the herd, to follow our own path, and to pursue our own dreams." Is she speaking here of the Confederacy?

The DLC agenda is even manifest in Democratic campaigning. In 2002, South Carolina Democratic senatorial candidate Alex Sanders lost to Republican Lindsey Graham by 112,000 votes and former Democratic governor Jim Hodges lost to Republican Mark Sanford by 64,000. And in 2000, Bush purportedly beat Al Gore by 220,000 votes. In the 2002 gubernatorial elections, less than 50% (282,210) of the total (571,157) black registered voters went to the polls and a significant number voted Republican. Here's the point. Tenenbaum has opted to diss a pool of 380,000 eligible, unregistered blacks and 288,947 registered, non-voting blacks - close to 700,000 non-voting, eligible African Americans - in the faint hope of picking up 250,000 conservative white, male voters. Additionally, since 2002, 50,000 new black voters have been added to the rolls. Tenenbaum's gambit is predicated on the notion that blacks have no insult level and nowhere else to be excepting with the Democrats.

The strategy of supporting the Green Party's candidate for Senate here in South Carolina and the so-called safe states strategy emerged prior to the Green Party Convention and was adopted by some anti-Nader progressives, a few of whom once supported him. It supposedly hinges on the Green Party focusing its' organizing efforts in solidly "blue" or "red" states avoiding "battleground" states so as not to open itself up to charges of aiding in a Republican victory.

Many people who I consider earnest in their support of a just social agenda, are in the "anybody but Bush" camp. They have settled on what they consider practical – John Kerry. This group includes many of the rock artists performing with "Vote for Change", many ex- Nader supporters and even a good number of chronic contrarians.

Obviously, the safe states approach gives Kerry a tepid endorsement. But in fairness, while the Green Party and the strategy are often mentioned in the same breath, to my understanding, it is not an official position of the party, even in the face of the not so thoughtful remark by GP veep nominee Pat LaMarche, in which she said she would not commit to voting for herself and [David] Cobb in November: "If Bush has got 11 percent of the vote in Maine come November 2."

Mind you, Nader has every right to run and I agree with him on most issues. Still, throughout Nader's electoral efforts past and present, grassroots organizing has been absent. And any comparison of Nader's travails with the disenfranchisement of voters in Florida is just absurd. Nader has shown no interest in party or alliances building. Accordingly, his ballot and ex-supporter difficulties are a direct consequence of not building anything

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in the years leading up to the election. Besides, when you hire whomever you can get to gather signatures and they have no real loyalty to your cause beyond getting paid, you can run into problems. In spite of everything, none of Nader's difficulties precludes those who want to vote for him from doing so. They can simply write in his name.

As Nader was entering the race, he met with members of the Congressional Black Caucus, who not only rejected him, some also cussed him out. Nader left the meeting looking a bit shocked. But what did he expect? Black Democrats are mosly more progressive than white Democrats but they are Democrats all the same. As for Nader's relationship with black voters and black leadership – grassroots or elected, he has no real political relationship. Blacks habitually vote Democratic because most of their elected officials are Democrats. Nader could not have thought that many black Democrats would reject Kerry for him?

As for David Cobb, the Green Party's presidential candidate, I first met him for dinner with members of the fledgling South Carolina Green Party prior to their national convention. He was out in the states meeting people and building support for his candidacy, as he should have been - as Nader was not. Cobb talked about being "all about party building, grassroots organizing and having a national campaign to the extent of our resources." I suggested to him that the Green Party not endorse Nader because he rejected the party until desperation had set in. I told Cobb that if he got the nomination he would find support especially if he focused on states where progressives might stand a ghost of a chance of being heard and pulling themselves together for not just the national, but the local fights and struggles. Our conversation never explicitly used the term safe states but the focus was surely on party building in the face of what many consider a "critical election".

My analysis took into account Efia Nwangaza's decision to stand up against Tenenbaum in the U.S. Senate race. In the 2004 Democratic primary, Tenenbaum's primary opposition garnered 40,000 votes and in 2000 Nader received 20,000 votes. Somewhere between those two numbers is the progressive base in South Carolina. Those are the folks to be organized into a functioning party to run for local offices, like school boards, town and city councils, much like the Christian right took to doing in the eighties.

So, back when it became clear that Tenenbaum would be the Democrats' nominee to replace Hollings and she began her predictable public parade to the right, Efia Nwangaza raised the possibility of her being the Green Party candidate for the office.

She says she wants an end to the drug war and believe that police should be held accountable for their wrongful actions by citizens review boards. She opposes the death penalty, supports inmates' rights and the re-enfranchisement of former felons and believes that prosecutor's have far too much power in the criminal justice system. She supports the workers' right to organize and universal health care for all within our borders. She supports reparations for the current victims and descendants of those dispossessed by imperialism and violence. She believes that US policy towards Haiti and Cuba are racist, illegal and immoral. She opposes the war on Iraq and seeks a halt to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

As Langston Hughes said: "A liberal is a guy who talks about how bad segregated trains are. Yet he rides in the whites-only section."

And what do the two people running against her stand for?

Tenenbaum and Republican Jim DeMint both support the Iraqi war. They both support the death penalty and a constitutional amendment in support of discrimination in the form of the anti-gay marriage amendment. And after years of lobbying in support of a woman's right to choose, Tenenbaum, upon entering the Senate race, tried to inoculate herself from the liberal label by feigning opposition to what choice opponents call "partial birth" abortion with a "health of the mother" exception.

Despite his moderate packaging, DeMint is a Lee Atwater/Karl Rove/George Bush Republican reared in the backyard of Bob Jones University. DeMint won his primary because his party wanted a real Republican not an iffy convert, which is how many in the GOP saw former Republican Governor and ex-Democrat David Beasley.

Tenenbaum will probably get the lion's share of black votes despite the obvious lack of evidence that she will represent their interest if she wins.

Yet to submit to her DLC agenda only pushes blacks further over to the conservative side of the social issues scale – be it through exploiting black homophobia – polls show that 69% of black voters oppose gay marriage but the problems with black homophobia are that it drives denial about the AIDS crisis in the community and it encourages African American support of legal discrimination. Tenenbaum supports current US foreign policy and wars for empire that continue to disproportionately claim the lives and resources of people of color and the poor. In South Carolina, out of the 19 soldiers killed in Iraq, 10 or 53 per cent have been black.

Someone once said to me, "Where you sleep is where your politics lie". This brings to mind concerns about Tenenbaum via her husband Sam, who if he isn't a member of AIPAC (American-Israeli Political Action Committee) will readily admit that he contributed money to the campaign of Arturo Davis who beat former Congressman Earl Hilliard of Alabama. Hilliard reaped the wrath of AIPAC for supporting the human rights of the Palestinian people. In fairness, Hilliard's local political problems weakened him, making it easy for AIPAC to pick him off. But other than his support of the Zionist cause, why else would Sam Tenenbaum cross state lines to involve himself in Alabama politics? The fact that AIPAC would attempt to make examples out of black elected officials who refuse to tow the pro-Israel line without reservations or objections is both chilling and insulting. Metaphorically speaking, it's tantamount to whipping runaway slaves.

Tenenbaum is currently trailing DeMint. Some are saying they would rather lose with Efia and the issues they support than lose with Tenenbaum, who is against most of the things they believe in. They say that at least with Nwangaza, the loss would be a win, as there would be something to build upon.

And, let's be honest, nationally, the safe states strategy isn't a strategy that advances the progressive movement in a meaningful

(**Gray** *continued on page 6*)

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(Welfare *continued from page 1*)

Stamps, public housing, WIC, Head Start and the school lunch program.

While the activism of Heritage, AEI, the Hudson Institute, and others has been fairly apparent to most careful observers, less known is the extent to which business lobbyists, and especially the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, worked to mobilize business people to support Republican welfare proposals.

The Chamber's anti-welfare position emphasized issues of dependency and work over illegitimacy and marriage, although as the sociologist Charles Post reported, "A [1994] National Business Agenda survey of approximately 5,000 of the Chamber's 210,000 members identified welfare reform as the fifth highest priority because it 'discourages marriage, underwrites out-of-wedlock births and creates an expectation of dependence rather than self-sufficiency." A Chamber survey the following year found that 75 percent of its members thought a five-year lifetime limit on benefits was too long and 77 percent agreed that all aid should be denied to children of an unmarried teenager "except in cases of rape or incest". Only 2 percent thought a requirement that all "able-bodied" food stamp recipients be required to work for benefits within 90 days "too tough". Forty-six percent thought tax credits should be offered to businesses as incentives for them to hire relief recipients; 21 percent preferred training grants or wage subsidies; 19 percent chose "flexible wage scales" that presumably would exempt them from minimum wage laws; while 14 percent thought that no incentives were needed or warranted.

In 1995, the Chamber's president made clear the purpose of pushing women off the rolls: "Well, there are lots of jobs. Anytime there's high unemployment, there's also [nonetheless] the long list of jobs that go a-begging. The fact of the matter is everyone wants to start in the middle or upper middle, and now you're going to be driven to start at the bottom and begin to work your way up."

Business Week explained to its readers that the "economic incentives for redesigning welfare" derived not just from the fact that "welfare wastes tax dollars" and causes crime and illegitimacy, but that the "cost to businesses of such wasted [human] potential is high, resulting in a dearth of qualified applicants for even low-skilled jobs such as running a cash register." Much of the Chamber's attention to welfare-to-work programs focused upon the importance of changing welfare recipients' "attitudes" toward work - especially toward low-status, low-wage work. It lauded programs that offered small businesses subsidies for employing recipients, and encouraged policymakers to follow the lead of Oregon, whose program, said one of the Chamber's members, allowed him "to essentially get a good solid employee at a minimal cost".

The Chamber urged that small businesses be "centrally involved in all phases of the new welfare system's design, development, operation, and evaluation," that reforms "Lower the cost of hiring a low-skilled worker," that employees hired off welfare rolls be subject to a probationary period and that, "During that period they couldn't sue under federal employment regulations pertaining to laws such as the Fair Labor Standards Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Occupational Safety and Health Act".

But welfare alone shouldn't monopolize our attention . In the 1990s, AFDC was abolished, but the Earned Income Tax Credit was expanded. Between 1993 and 1999, federal spending on the EITC, which subsidized the wages of low-paid workers with children, increased from $15.5 billion to $30 billion, and the number of families receiving the Credit climbed from 15.1 million to more than 20 million. By 1995 the federal EITC cost more than the combined national and state share of AFDC. Its effects were not trivial: the federal EITC turned a $6 per hour job into one worth $8.40 per hour; when combined with the additional EITCs operating in many states it rose to as much as $9 per hour. Ron Haskins here makes the crucial caveat, however:

"Despite the effectiveness of the EITC and other [changes in personal income] taxes, the overall impact of government programs in 1999 reduced the poverty gap by only 56.3 percent, less than in any previous year except 1983 and well below the 62.4 percent reduction of 1979. . .The major reason for the reduced effectiveness of government programs in reducing the poverty gap is a decline in the impact of means-tested cash benefits."

Relief reduced the poverty gap by 14.9 percent in 1999 compared to 28.8 percent in 1979: half as many poor people were lifted to or above the poverty line by welfare and food stamps in 1999 than were in 1979. And the EITC could not be depended upon to make up the difference, nor could it benefit any former recipient who was not working. Yet without it, many families would have been even worse off. While the percentage of income of female-headed families in the bottom income quintile derived from cash welfare benefits declined 42 percent from 1993 to 1999 and the percentage from food stamps dropped 23 percent, the percentage of their total income derived from the EITC jumped 243 percent, from earnings 82 percent and from child support 44 percent. For similarly situated families in the second income quintile, the portion of their income derived from the EITC rose 191 percent. This move from relief to tax credits shifts public monies away from those not working (not working above the table, at any rate) to those in the low-wage labor market, acting as a reward and incentive to the prospective employee and as a wage subsidy to his or her employer. As the economist Robert Solow reported, "Employers should understand that they benefit from the EITC too, because, like any subsidy, it puts a little downward pressure on the market wage."

Today Democrats and Republicans alike contemplate the "privatization" of Social Security and regressive "reforms" to Medicare, Medicaid, Food Stamps, public housing, WIC, Head Start and the school lunch program.

Joel Potts of the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services put it candidly: "For the first time in Ohio's history we are spending more welfare dollars to support work than to support dependency."

During the first great assault on American poor relief in the late nineteenth century, anti-welfare reformer Josephine Shaw

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Lowell argued that poor relief depresses wages for the laboring classes. But in fact poor relief does quite the opposite, it sets a floor for wages. Lowell often discussed the ways in which whatever injuries may be done to the poor man by pauperizing him, and they were many, those who ultimately suffered most were those who "work all night in cellars to give us our daily bread. . .who carry us safely on thundering railway trains. . .who cook for us and wait upon us and clothe us; all those men and women without whom we could not live in comfort for one day."

There are the workers and the idlers, and offering aid to the idlers harms the workers, whom we should celebrate, as Lowell does above. But she overlooks that these are not distinct classes, not then and not now - the line between working and idle, between just getting by and not getting by at all, is a thin one, a permeable membrane through which people pass back and forth and back and forth again. Class is fluid in America - but not in the way that Alexis de Tocqueville or Horatio Alger or Newt Gingrich would have you believe. It is most fluid at the margins, where the benefits of relief are most fully felt.

And it is there where an influx of new workers into the labor force has its greatest effects: job displacements, wage reductions (especially at the lower end), or both. Even ardent pro-work reformers like Lawrence Mead acknowledged this: "I think there is enough increase in the labor supply due to welfare reform that there might be some tendency for real wages to fall slightly," he said. The economist Timothy Bartik estimated that welfare reform added 400,000 low-wage workers to the labor force from 1993-1997, one million by 2002, and predicted that waivers and the PRA could be responsible for two million additional workers by 2008 (assuming recession in 2001 and recovery in 2005). While Solow predicted a three to five percent decline in the average real wage as a result of reform, Bartik expected little overall effect (perhaps one-half of one percent), but about a three percent increase in the number of less-educated women in the labor market - which would lower the wages of a female high school dropout by between five and fifteen percent (Jared Bernstein estimated 13.2 percent, and even more for black women). Moreover, reform will have "spillover" effects, increasing unemployment among male high school dropouts and reducing their wages as well. Without the PRA, Bartik concluded, the rise in real wages in the late 1990s would have begun earlier and the distance between overall wages and those of male dropouts would have been narrower.

There were other more easily discernible labor market effects of reform. New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani cut 22,000 municipal jobs between 1995 and 2000, and most were replaced by workfare workers. Part-time welfare workers constituted 75 percent of the labor force of the Parks Department and one-third of Sanitation. The average city clerical salary was $12.32 per hour, while it was $1.80 per hour for Work Experience Program workers, who received no benefits. The city's Department of Homeless Services itself replaced unionized city workers with welfare recipients fulfilling workfare obligations.

One Salt Lake City official told the New York Times that "Without the welfare people. . . we would have had to raise the wage. . . maybe 5 percent." Many welfare recipients, contrary to most assumptions, replaced moderately-skilled workers and have assumed some key responsibilities from managing case files, conducting safety checks and opening and closing public facilities to providing care to children and the elderly.

In 2000, New York City welfare offices distributed fliers from a security company seeking 500 replacement workers in anticipation of a possible strike.

What's more, much of the job training offered through new contracts was not in the "hard" skills needed for particular jobs but focused upon "soft" skills like dressing appropriately, timeliness and attitudes in the workplace - that is, ensuring a compliant, docile and dependent workforce for private companies with the use of public funds. Jamie Peck summarized it succinctly: "workfare is not about creating jobs for people that don't have them; it is about creating workers for jobs that nobody wants." In this light, the PRA's sharp limitations on aid available to legal immigrants is part of a comprehensive retooling of relief to reduce the number of people able to refuse low-wage work.

As the economist Rebecca Blank writes: "the changes in welfare program design have almost surely made less skilled women - and particularly single mothers - more vulnerable to the economy." And those pushed into the labor market do seem more vulnerable: The Manhattan Institute noted approvingly that the sharpest declines in welfare receipt and the largest gains in employment were among "young (18-29) mothers, mothers with children under seven years of age, high school dropouts, black and Hispanic single mothers, and [for welfare receipt only] those who have never been married." Blank adds, "As these women rely on earnings for an increased share of their income, and as they face tighter restrictions on their access to public assistance, they will be more subject to the vagaries of the labor market." That was perhaps the key the outcome of reform.

American businesses, especially those that needed low-wage, low-skilled workers, clearly understood the economic benefits of welfare reform.

As we consider the reauthorization of welfare legislation, we might ask who has truly benefitted from this gruesome new law, and cast a long glance at the state of American wages, the unemployment rate, and the success low-income women have had in the low-wage labor market after having left reform. Remember that line: "Without the welfare people. . . we would have had to raise the wage. . . maybe 5 percent." The bottom line is the bottom line: cheapening the cost of labor. CP

Stephen Pimpare is teaches political science at Yeshiva College and the Wurzweiler School of Social Work. His book New Victorians: Poverty, Politics, and Propaganda in Two Gilded Ages was published in August by the New Press.

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(**Gray** *continued from page 3)*

way. A strategy is supposed to get the movement somewhere – to help gain an advantage. As a national strategy, the safe states approach is closer to being a tactic intended to neutralize criticism of Kerry and to put some progressives in a neutral place.

On the local level, in a state like South Carolina where both the Republicans and Democrats absolutely ignore, without fear of consequence, the political and economic needs and aspirations of hundreds of thousands of black citizens, for those who are serious about building a third party or identifying the organizers of a new social movement at the grassroots level, a commitment to what should be done in South Carolina is a good place to start.

Even in the face of what Tenenbaum stands for, many of the names on the safe states/anti-Nader list would no doubt try to contrive some rationale for supporting her.

But as Danny Glover quoting poet Langston Hughes' definition of a liberal said, "a liberal is a guy who talks about how bad segregated trains are. Yet he rides in the whites-only section." So this could be a test to see whether the progressive community and the Green Party in particular, is serious about rebuilding or are they just a bunch of liberals masquerading as progressives. CP

Kevin Gray is a civil rights organizer in South Carolina and a contributor to Dime's Worth of Difference: Beyond the Lesser of Two Evils.

(**OLS** *continued from page 1)*

Dear Mr. Cockburn,

There was enormous destruction in the bombings, especially in Leipzig, Germany's old publishing center, where most of the set type for thousands of books, tons and tons of lead, were destroyed in one night. However, that could have been replaced over time:

- the Nazis forbade to use German fonts in '41, so used up and destroyed "German" fonts were not replaced during wartime;

- German fonts were so much identified with the Nazis, that the Allies forbade them again after '45;

- the Germans were sick of themselves (with good reason, one might argue) and did not use those fonts any more, one might say in a form of aesthetical scapegoating.

Best wishes,

Tjalf Prößdorf

Dear Tjalf, Sorry to intrude on your time once more, but why did Nazis forbid use of German fonts?

Best,

Alex C

Dear Mr. Cockburn,

That's one of history's sick jokes. (To my knowledge, the Nazis exceptionally didn't even bother murdering anyone over it, so I think it can be called a joke.)

The official explanation (given by Martin Bormann) was that German Script (Fraktura) stemmed from what he called Schwabacher Judenletter (Jewish lettering from Schwabach) and had been developed and propagated by Jewish printers from Schwabach.

Schwabach is a city near Nuremberg and that region, being immensely rich before the thirty years war was a center of printing and editing in 15th century Germany.

One theory has it that people in the occupied countries feigned not to be able to read the lettering and the occupying forces did not want that conflict as well. My personal guess is that the Nazis were a lot more modern than anyone cares and dares to admit, and, as Fraktura was on its way out anyway (academics hated it from at least the French revolution onwards, scientific publishing in Fraktura was a no no from the 1880s onward) the Nazis for some reason decided to give it a good last kick.

That really hurt the feelings of the friends of Fraktura at the time, quite a few of whom had happily rooted for the Nazis in the thirties, believing they cared for German traditions. There even was a letter of protest from the mayor of Schwabach who rightly stated that Jews in the 15th century (when Schwabacher was developed) were not allowed to be master printers in Schwabach... (or anywhere else in Europe).

After the second world war, the allies forbade Fraktura as well - one only got a license to publish a newspaper if one did not use Fraktura - and as that was equivalent to a license to print money, people obeyed.

That Bormann letter (not a forgery, btw) is on the internet somewhere, in case I find it, I'll send you a copy (in German).

As to all that Nazi propaganda in Fraktura, I think I will one day upload some socialist and communist propaganda in Fraktura to the internet - up to circa 1930 the thing was about as politicised as Greek script is nowadays in Greece.

Best wishes,

Tjalf Prößdorf CP

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